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**Sent:** 6/15/2017 11:33:31 PM  
**Subject:** FW: For OPA review: Question from Hungry Horse News (Montana) re: wells at Columbia Falls Aluminum co. SF site  
**Attachments:** RE: media inquiry: CFAC water wells; Fwd: CFAC CLP message from CFAC

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**From:** Vranka, Joe  
**Sent:** Friday, June 9, 2017 2:41 PM  
**To:** Smidinger, Betsy <Smidinger.Betsy@epa.gov>  
**Cc:** Moler, Robert <Moler.Robert@epa.gov>; Cirian, Mike <Cirian.Mike@epa.gov>; Murray, Bill <Murray.Bill@epa.gov>; Stavnes, Sandra <Stavnes.Sandra@epa.gov>; Wharton, Steve <Wharton.Steve@epa.gov>; Mylott, Richard <Mylott.Richard@epa.gov>; Mutter, Andrew <mutter.andrew@epa.gov>  
**Subject:** FW: For OPA review: Question from Hungry Horse News (Montana) re: wells at Columbia Falls Aluminum co. SF site

Hi, Betsy:

We do not have a fact sheet on the site at this time. The Columbia Falls Aluminum Company (CFAC) is conducting remedial investigation pursuant to a [work plan](#) attached to the November 2015 [Administrative Order on Consent](#) for Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study for the Anaconda Aluminum Columbia Falls Reduction Plant site. [Monthly progress reports](#) are available for public review on EPA's [CFAC site web page](#). Also available for public review is the [Draft Phase 1 Data Summary Report](#) for the first phase of data collection at the site.

The Hungry Horse News printed an article on Wednesday March 24 (<http://www.hungryhorsenews.com/article/20170524/ARTICLE/170529985>). EPA received a media inquiry for the site on Wednesday May 31. Region 8 sent the following draft response to Headquarters (OPA) Thursday June 1:

- There are a couple of wells mentioned that we avoided sampling due to known contaminants. This is not the case as the wells had the power disconnected and the production equipment is still in the wells.
- These wells pump at about 1000 gpm and that would not work for our sampling guidance.
- Also it will take a crane and other equipment to remove the well pumps.
- We have historical data for these wells and they have not shown that they are the highest contaminated wells.
- We are also looking at adding these wells into the phase 2 of our Remedial Investigation.

The point is that there were some wells not sampled during phase 1 because they are production wells (for the former operation of the processing plant) that still have the massive pumps and could not be easily sampled without some major work to access them and sample them in a manner consistent with EPA guidance. Depending upon the data needs, EPA could require sampling of these wells or the installation of ground water monitoring wells as necessary in phase 2 of the remedial investigation data collection.

Also attached is a June 2 email response from the Columbia Falls Aluminum Company, including a response letter and a point-by-point response to the article in the Hungry Horse News.

Please let me know if you have any questions or if you require additional information.

Thank you,

Joe

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**From:** Smidinger, Betsy  
**Sent:** Friday, June 09, 2017 1:36 PM

To: Mutter, Andrew <mutter.andrew@epa.gov>; Mylott, Richard <Mylott.Richard@epa.gov>; Vranka, Joe <vranka.joe@epa.gov>; Murray, Bill <Murray.Bill@epa.gov>; Stavnes, Sandra <Stavnes.Sandra@epa.gov>; Wharton, Steve <Wharton.Steve@epa.gov>

**Subject:** FW: For OPA review: Question from Hungry Horse News (Montana) re: wells at Columbia Falls Aluminum co. SF site

Hi All – I talked to Kell Kelly (SF Advisor to the Administrator) Thursday and he asked for information on 2 sites.

1. Columbia Falls Aluminum Co. based on the string of emails below. Do we have a fact sheet with the status of the site that I can send to Kell? I did find the bullets below a bit confusing. Do we have any additional info or a way to explain this for Kell? How long has this response been held up?
2. Kell also mentioned an inquiry about Pioneer Natural Resources in Creed, CO regarding mediation with EPA where the mediator was a federal judge. Pioneer was willing to settle for \$100K and EPA wanted \$8M. The mediator landed at \$4M. Does this inquiry ring a bell to anyone? Do we have more information I can send to Kell to explain this situation.

Thanks  
Betsy

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**From:** regionalpress

**Sent:** Wednesday, June 7, 2017 3:27 PM

**To:** Davis, Patrick <davis.patrick@epa.gov>; Kelly, Albert <kelly.albert@epa.gov>

**Cc:** Konkus, John <konkus.john@epa.gov>

**Subject:** FW: For OPA review: Question from Hungry Horse News (Montana) re: wells at Columbia Falls Aluminum co. SF site

Kel and Patrick,

John K asked that we get your view on this?

Thanks ng

**Nancy Grantham**  
**Office of Public Affairs**  
**US Environmental Protection Agency**  
**202-564-6879 (desk)**  
**202-253-7056 (mobile)**

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**From:** Mylott, Richard

**Sent:** Monday, June 05, 2017 4:25 PM

**To:** regionalpress <regionalpress@epa.gov>

**Cc:** Mutter, Andrew <mutter.andrew@epa.gov>

**Subject:** FW: For OPA review: Question from Hungry Horse News (Montana) re: wells at Columbia Falls Aluminum co. SF site

Still pending from last week...

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**From:** Mylott, Richard

**Sent:** Thursday, June 1, 2017 11:03 AM

**To:** regionalpress <regionalpress@epa.gov>

**Cc:** Mutter, Andrew <mutter.andrew@epa.gov>

**Subject:** For OPA review: Question from Hungry Horse News (Montana) re: wells at Columbia Falls Aluminum co. SF site

Chris Peterson with the Hungry Horse News has questions for Mike Cirian, EPA RPM for the Columbia Falls Aluminum Company Superfund site in Montana, regarding some claims made in a [recent op-ed](#) about a handful of wells on the site and why those wells were not included in the initial remedial investigation associated with the site (4<sup>th</sup> paragraph of linked op-ed).

**Draft messages:**

- The op-ed claims we avoided sampling wells due to known contamination. This is not inaccurate.
- Under the direction EPA, CFAC's investigation is ongoing and will develop comprehensive data and information to identify cleanup needs and inform remedies at the site. We have historical data for these wells and they have not shown that they are the highest contaminated wells.
- These specific wells were not sampled in phase 1, as the wells had the power disconnected and production equipment remains in them. It will take a crane and other equipment to remove the well pumps. These wells also pump at about 1000 gpm, which is not consistent with EPA sampling guidance.
- If sampling these wells becomes important to the ongoing remedial investigation, we will look to address these issues and potentially add the wells into phase 2 of our Remedial Investigation.